

## The Man With the Master Mind

gross materialist. He had started early in his medical practice upon a crusade of exposure of spiritism, and ended up by becoming a convert to the belief. Then, backed by ample wealth and hampered by no ties, he searched the east for the secrets it holds. India, China, Persia, and even forbidden Tibet he forced to give up his hidden lore.

"When you have seen the things that I have seen," he often roared out to me in his thunderous voice, "you will believe. I have seen an Indian yogi use a tibia and materialize the complete body, raiment and all. What do you think of that?" bringing his ponderous fist down on the table until the windows rattled.

"I think," I replied, "that there are some things that must be seen to be believed, and even then we may explain them on purely scientific grounds."

"What would you say if you saw me materialize from this skull the body of her whose face forms the handle?" The sentence ended in an explosion of nestness, as he playfully tapped this very skull that Achmon covets so.

"I should like to see that," I answered.

"Ah, but you should have seen her in the flesh," he resumed meditatively. "God! but she was beautiful! I found her in the mission at Mussoorie, but she was not born for the hymn-singing trade. Her father was French, her mother a mountain maid of Gurwal, and she had been up to Simla once and seen life. When I told her of the great world beyond, where the shadows of the Himalayas fell not, her bosom heaved and her eyes flashed like those of the she-tiger that had taken that year a toll of a hundred lives in the foothills. She left the mission and the half-caste Hindu who had dared lift his eyes to watch her glorious self and came with me."

"I saw murder in Achmon's beady eyes, and his chest muscles swelled at the deep intaking of his breath."

"And then?" I asked, continued Clarke.

"And then she died. For two short months I showed her in the Calcutta bazaars. Paris, London, New York, were denied the light."

"Look, isn't that beautiful?" Dr. Ranthan lifted the silver skull. "A native Calcutta workman did it, and I stood over him cursing him with a thousand deaths if he marred a line of the picture of my friend."

"A few days later I bolted into Ranthan's apartment after a book he had promised me. I had not been accustomed to knock, and as I opened the door I heard the unmistakable swish of skirts, and Ranthan stood before me confused and sheepish. I missed the silver skull from the table."

"Pardon me, you are not alone," I said.

"No—yes—that is, I am alone, of course. The book is in that room. Just step right in."

"I did so, and I heard him stealthily close the door behind me, but not until I had again heard the stealthy tread of a woman's garments. It took but a second to seize the book and return to his study. Dr. Ranthan was calmly seated, reading. The room had no other occupant. The door of the third room was open and it was tenanted. The silver skull was on the table in its accustomed place."

"For some time I saw little of Ranthan. His visits to the hospital ceased, and the studies he had taken up with so much ardor seemed forgotten."

"One night about midnight Cartwright burst into my room in an interesting accident case."

"Come along at once," he said. "Something's wrong with Ranthan. I heard the crash of a falling body overhead. I can't raise him. Both his doors are locked."

"I hurriedly threw on a coat and followed. The doors resisted all our efforts and we called the police. A lock was smashed and we entered. The place was in darkness. I switched on the electric light, and there, prostrate on the floor lay the huge bulk of Ranthan. The carved ivory hint of a knife protruded from his left side. I had often noted the weapon in his collection. The silver skull was gone."

"Suicide was the verdict of the police. The doors were firmly bolted from within, the windows looked into a court, the only egress from which was through the rooms of students on the first floor, all of whom, including Cartwright, were busy with their books when the tragedy occurred. Escape through the hall was impossible, for Cartwright had rushed out immediately. Besides, there were the bolted doors."

"But Cartwright and I both knew that Ranthan's hand never struck the blow that sank twelve inches of blade and three inches of hilt into his own heart just at the left armpit. A left-handed blow was out of the question. A right-handed blow at that point would lack the force."

"A closer examination of the locks showed me that the one which was intact, while seemingly bolted, might be passed with a key, as the ring into which the bolt shot was a false one, hinged at the top and kept in place by a spring, evidently the half-baked invention of some previous tenant."

"Recalling hints dropped by Ranthan, the case gradually began to take shape in my mind when Cartwright, who had assumed charge of the dead man's papers, came to me with this in Ranthan's well-known hand."

"Read it, Sexton, page 401 of the scrap book."

"For the benefit of science, I, John R. Ranthan, hereby declare, that if I am slain, it will be by the hand of Yath, half-caste maid of Gurwal, whose body I have repeatedly materialized in the flesh from the relics in my possession. I have sworn not to write the secret. Let him who would learn it seek out Yath, the half-caste yogi, whose cave lies in the foothills of the Himalayas, in the province of Sikhim, ten leagues north of the temple of Darjeeling. I have spoken."

"He of the dammed soul lies. He had the secret from Tibet, where I myself learned it," muttered Achmon.

"Well," continued Clarke, ignoring the interruption, "as I said, I pieced together the story of the silver skull, and the fact that Cartwright had left immediately to summon me, seemed to

indicate that an escape were not impossible. From India, I reasoned, vengeance had reached Ranthan, and to India would his slayer return. I watched the docks and nabbed Achmon. In his possession, and carefully guarded, was the silver skull. This alone convicted him for I knew it was useless to tell an American jury what I read behind those eyes, that would slay me now if they had the basilisk's power. The sentence was life, yet here he is.

"Then we can save the state of Illinois something by returning him to New York," said Inspector Ship, who had arrived in time to hear, with staring, incredulous eyes the most of Clarke's story.

"Not until I have made an experiment," said Clarke. "Achmon, you say you have the secret. Prove it, and the skull is yours."

"I know not if the conditions be right, sahib, but I will try," returned the Hindu.

Rapidly he cleared the table of all save the silver skull, which he placed in the center. At his direction Clarke then lighted the gas, turned it down until only a point of flame showed, and put out the electric light. He then ranged up in a half-circle before the skull. The inspector, who at first declined to be a party to the imposture, was on the right. Then came the Hindu, then myself, and then Clarke. At the medium's orders we then clasped hands and waited, our eyes on the grinning skull before us. No sound broke the silence save our regular breathing, which shortly fell into unison. The Hindu's hand in mine burned like a coal of fire. My nerves began to feel the strain. I was relieved when, with a sidelong glance of the eye, I noted that Ship's free hand was in his side pocket, and I felt sure he fingered the butt of a revolver. The fitful light seemed to crown the bust on the skull with a phosphorescent aura. The diamond in the upper incisor flashed like a point of fire. Clarke's hand in mine was as steady as the cylinderhead of a marine engine.

Suddenly the Hindu began to intone monotonously and seemingly without end:

"Yath, come! Yath, come! Yath, come!"

On, on, on until my brain reeled and my whole being revolved at the refrain. My eyes were glued to the face on the skull. Could it be? Yes, the skull gradually was fading from view and the silver bust was rising and growing larger, larger and nearer, until—

I stole a glance at the inspector; he saw it as well—a glorious figure stood before us, the eyes flashing, the nostrils distended, and the breast heaving with sentient life.

The power of description is palsied at the attempt to picture her. Loosely clad in folds of shimmering silk, through which every line and curve showed as in bas-relief, she was the living presentment of the face on the skull; but added to the cold beauty of line she had the warm loveliness of flesh and color that even the ghostly gaslight could not conceal. A diamond flashed from her right upper incisor when she opened her red lips in a smile. Two other diamonds were set in the sides of the nostrils, after the fashion of the dancing girls in the temple of Trichinopoly.

Then she spoke, doubtless in her native Hindustani. The words were unintelligible, but the sweetness of the voice was as of a maid singing in the twilight.

"Yath, I have called thee," answered Achmon. "I would question thee. Answer in the name thou learned in the Forthcote mission. What hand slew him of the dammed soul, who was called Ranthan?"

"I slew him, Achmon. I loved him not. He lured me with his tales of the cities of men, as the flame lures the moth. I followed him and happiness was mine for a space. And then I knew I was a woman of lost caste, in, but not of the life around me. I pined for the hills of Mussoorie. I passed and was gone until he learned the great secret of the Master-knot."

"Does he not then offend thee in the ethereal world?" questioned Achmon.

"No, Achmon, he passed out into utter darkness, and, moreover, the freed soul is at liberty to seek only affinities. I am weary, Achmon, and would return."

"Go, then, light of my soul, and await my call."

Slowly the vision faded. Through the hazy folds of the silken robe again appeared the dim outlines of the skull on the table. Clarke released my hand and the electric lights flashed up. The inspector sat in a trance, his eyes still glued to the skull.

"I have won, Achmon!" cried Clarke. "I saw nothing and you know it. I keep the skull."

"I bide my time," returned the Hindu sulkily.

The light of dawn was beginning to show through the windows. The inspector sprang up with a sudden access of energy.

"Well, well!" he said. "Got to be getting this chap to the station. You'll have a charge of course, Mr. Clarke. In case New York don't want him. Be around about ten. Here, my man, I guess we'll just put the bracelets on you. You won't try any of your A. P. A. tricks with them."

Achmon meekly extended his hands. I thought it was largely bluster, and was not surprised when, just as they were ready to start, the inspector turned to Clarke, and in a perfectly audible whisper, said:

"Mr. Clarke, couldn't you come on with us? I don't mind admitting I'm a bit creepy."

"It is not in the least necessary," returned Clarke. "Ghosts don't walk in the daytime. Besides, haven't you your driver outside?"

"Didn't you see her?" I asked Clarke after the inspector had departed with his prisoner, and we were completing our previous hasty toilettes.

"I saw nothing and heard nothing but the Hindu's one-sided nonsense."

Then I told him what I had seen and what I was sure the inspector had also witnessed.

"Now, how can you explain it?" I asked.

"Dr. Hudson has already explained it pretty well. At least, he has given us a working hypothesis. Your senses were under the control of the subjective mind while I was in a normal state. Now, you were hypnotized. A young Englishman once snapped a camera on the rope-trick as performed by a Hindu fakir. His eye saw the fakir toss the rope into the air and the end was lost in space. The fakir's boy climbed the rope until he also disappeared. He appeared again and climbed down. The fakir then hauled down the rope and passed his hat for annas in the crowd. The dry plate, when developed, showed nothing but the pantomime of the fakir. Why were the deceived eye, while I was the infallible dry plate."

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### Juvenile department

All Summer Goods in this section must be quickly disposed of. Extra special bargain prices are in effect to move this merchandise. A few of Monday's Sale leaders—

Children's White Dresses; lawn and pique; Gretchen effects; low neck, short sleeves, high neck, tucked yoke, long sleeves; sizes 6 to 14 years; \$3.00 values..... **\$2.00**

Girls' White Sailor Suits; linens and ducks; sizes 8 to 12 years; worth \$4.50..... **\$3.49**

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\$3.50 Lisle Suits.....	<b>\$2.25</b>	50c Knee-Length Tights.....	<b>29c</b>
\$2.50 Lisle Suits.....	<b>\$1.65</b>	50c Black Knee Tights.....	<b>29c</b>
\$2.00 Lisle Suits.....	<b>\$1.45</b>	\$1.75 Black Knee Tights.....	<b>\$1.15</b>
\$1.50 Lisle Suits.....	<b>95c</b>	35c Misses' Vests and Pants.....	<b>23c</b>
\$1.75 Lisle Suits.....	<b>\$1.35</b>	50c Misses' Vests and Pants.....	<b>33c</b>
\$1.50 Lace-Trimmed Suits.....	<b>\$1.10</b>	65c Women's Vests and Knee Tights.....	<b>45c</b>
\$1.25 Cotton Suits.....	<b>85c</b>	Boys' 50c Balbriggan Shirts and Drawers; all styles; garment.....	<b>29c</b>
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## Ready-to-wear section

Every linen suit in stock on sale Monday at half price. Neat tailored styles; lace and braid trimmed; colors are pink, pale blue, tan and white; also a few three-piece styles. Prices following:

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\$20.00 at .....	\$10.00	\$35.00 at .....	\$17.50
\$25.00 at .....	\$12.50	\$40.00 at .....	\$20.00
\$30.00 at .....	\$15.00	\$45.00 at .....	\$22.50
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### Center aisle

MONDAY.

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Ladies' black Ties for Oxford shoes; 25c kind. Special, pair.....	<b>15c</b>
35c Sleeve Protectors, pair.....	<b>25c</b>
Ladies' Shoulder Brace Hose Supporters. Special, pair.....	<b>29c</b>
Ladies' velvet grip-front pad Hose Supporters; worth 25c. Special.....	<b>19c</b>
Boys' elastic loop Pant Bands. Special.....	<b>9c</b>
Ladies' Carlton Coin Bags; \$1.00 value. Special.....	<b>68c</b>
25c and 35c Embroidered Top Collars. Special.....	<b>19c</b>
40c Neck Ruching; all colors. Special, yard.....	<b>29c</b>
25c dark amber Side Combs. Monday, each.....	<b>19c</b>
Ladies' white and cream Net Ties; one yard long, 15 inches wide; 35c ties, each.....	<b>12 1/2c</b>
\$3.50 6-inch Cut Glass Nappies. Special.....	<b>\$2.89</b>

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One thousand yards best grade Amoskeag Apron Gingham; value 8 1-3c. At, yard.....	<b>6 1/2c</b>
John S. Brown's 66-inch bleached Table Damask; worth \$1.25. At, yard.....	<b>89c</b>
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